

OUT OF A PIONEER'S TRUNK.

It was a slightly cynical, but fairly good-humored crowd that gathered about a warehouse on Long Wharf in San Francisco one afternoon in the summer of '01. Although the occasion was an auction, the bidders' chances more than usually hampered, and the season and locality famous for reckless speculation, there was scarcely any excitement among the bystanders, and a lazy, half-humorous curiosity seemed to have taken the place of any zeal for gain.

It was an auction of unclaimed trunks and boxes—the personal luggage of early emigrants—which had been left in storage in bulk or warehouse at San Francisco, while the owner was seeking his fortune in the mines.

The difficulty and expense of transport, often obliging the gold seeker to make part of his journey on foot, restricted him to the smallest impediments, and that of a kind not often found in the luggage of ordinary civilization. As a consequence during the emigration of '49 he was apt on landing to avail himself of the invitation usually displayed on some of the doors of the rude hostleries on the shore: "Best for the Wary and Storage for Trunks." In a majority of cases he never returned to claim his stored property. Enforced absence, protracted equally by good or evil fortune, accumulated the high storage charges until they usually far exceeded the actual value of the goods; sickness, further emigration, or death also reduced the number of possible claimants, and that more wonderful human frailty—absolute forgetfulness of deposited possessions—combined together to leave the bulk of the property in the custodian's hands. Under an understood agreement they were always sold at public auction after a given time. Although the contents of some of the trunks were exposed, it was found more in keeping with the public sentiment to sell the trunks unopened and unopened. The element of curiosity was kept up from time to time by the furtive disclosures of the lucky or unlucky purchaser, and general bidding thus encouraged—except when the speculator, with the true gambling instinct, gave no idea in his face of what was drawn in this lottery. Generally, however, some suggestion in the exterior of the trunk, a label or initials; some conjectural knowledge of its former owner, or the idea that he might be secretly present in the hope of getting his property back for less than the accumulated dues, kept up the bidding and interest.

A modest-looking, well-worn portmanteau had just been put up at a small opening bid, when Harry Flint joined the crowd. The young man had arrived a week before at San Francisco, friendless and penniless, and had been forced to part with his own effects to secure necessary food and lodging, while looking for employment. In the irony of fate that morning the proprietors of a dry goods store, struck with his good looks and manners, had offered him a situation, if he could make himself more presentable to their fair clients. Harry Flint was gazing half abstractedly, half hopefully, at the portmanteau without noticing the auctioneer's persuasive challenge.

In his abstraction he was not aware that the auctioneer's assistant was also looking at him curiously, and that possibly his dejected and half-clad appearance had excited the attention of one of the cynical bystanders, who was exchanging a few words with the assistant. He was, however, recalled to himself a moment later, when the portmanteau was knocked down at \$15, and considerably startled when the assistant placed it at his feet with a grim smile.

"That's your property, Fowler, and I reckon you look as if you wanted it back here."

"But—there's some mistake," stammered Flint. "I didn't bid."

"No, but Tom Flynn did for you. You see, I spotted you from the first, and told Flynn I reckoned you were one of those chaps who came back from the mines dead broke. And he up and bought your things for you—like a square man. That's Flynn's style, if he is a gambler."

"But, persisted Flint, "this never was my property. My name isn't Fowler and I never left anything here."

The assistant looked at him with a grim, half-credulous, half-scornful smile.

"Have it your own way," he said, "but I oughter tell ya, old man, that I'm the warehouse clerk, and I remember you. I'm here for that purpose. But as that valise is bought and paid for by somebody else and given to you, it's nothing more to me. Take or leave it."

The ridiculousness of quarrelling over the mere form of his good fortune here struck Flint, and, as his abrupt benefactor had as abruptly disappeared, he hurried off with his prize. Reaching his cheap lodging house he examined its contents. As he surmised, it contained a full suit of clothing of the better sort and suitable to his urban needs. There were a few articles of jewelry, which he put religiously aside. There were some letters which seemed to be of a purely business character. There were a few daguerotypes of pretty faces, one of which was singularly fascinating to him. But there was another, of a young man, which started him with its marvellous resemblance to himself. In a flash of intelligence he understood it all now. It was the likeness of the former owner of the trunk for whom

Pluck and Adventure.

COAT TORN OFF BY A SHARK.

VERBOARD and struggling desperately with a man-eating shark with the perilous position in which the Rev. John McMillan, pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, of Atlantic City, found himself on a recent afternoon. There seems to be no doubt that the minister would have been mangled to death by the fish had not one of his friends killed it with a spear-shaped boat-hook.

As the priests of Charles C. Tull, in his launch, the Anna M., the Rev. Mr. McMillan, the Rev. Dr. H. J. Caldwell, the Rev. S. W. Steckel, B. D. Coley, Jr., and Clarence Powell, started on a fishing trip to a grassy bay a few miles beyond Atlantic City.

Fishermen have reported for the last week or more that they have sighted sharks in the bay. But most of the reports have been regarded merely as fish stories.

Rev. Mr. McMillan sat in the stern of the boat. Suddenly the line was almost dragged out of his hands. To the astonishment of everybody, the fish that the clergyman had hooked began to drag the boat along. The clergyman is a sturdy-built, athletic man. A weaker one would have had the line simply torn from his grasp.

But, strong as he was, the effort proved too much for him. As he continued to hold on the drag on the line became the harder. He was brought to a position where he was leaning far over the side of the boat. In the excitement, he did not realize how far he was leaning. Then he lost his balance and fell into the water.

At the sound of the splash the line slackened. The shark had turned. Its fin rose sharp and vicious-looking above the water. It darted straight at the clergyman. The shark, turning on its back, opened its mouth. The clergyman dived to get out of the way. The shark's teeth had caught a section of his coat. The garment was completely torn from his body. The teeth also tore the flesh of the minister's right arm and shoulder.

The shark dove after its prey, but the clergyman escaped by coming to the surface of the water again. Then the shark rose also and darted at Mr. McMillan for the second time.

Mr. Tull had meanwhile seized a long boat-hook that had a sharp prong on the end of it. He was standing at the side of the boat, awaiting the reappearance of the shark. When it came up and started merrily for the clergyman, Mr. Tull drove the prong-shaped boat-hook down with all his strength. It passed into the shark's body. The fish began to founder helplessly. Half a minute later it lay still in the water. The single blow had killed it and had saved Mr. McMillan's life. Then the clergyman was helped aboard.

Afterward the party landed the shark. It measured more than nine feet.

FIGHT WITH A SNAKE.

C. E. Stevenson, of Pittsburg, who is at present in the oil fields at Knobsville, has them all flaged when it comes to a genuine hair-raising story. Stevenson weighs about 250 pounds and is not used to strenuous life, but he possessed of some money and is well trained for the mortal combat in which he accidentally became engaged.

While wandering around over the oil territory, Stevenson came across a romantic spot, cool and shady, so inviting to his tired and corpulent body that he decided to rest awhile. When he was thus reposing on the log he felt something touch his back, but paid little heed, thinking it but a stray dog. Finally he turned around and saw the largest monster in the snake line he had ever beheld in or out of captivity. The demon seemed to laugh at him from its wicked, fiery eyes, as it edged toward him, while he tried to nerves to the spot. Gathering his nerves by an supreme effort, he jumped over the reptile and emitted a yell that would have caused a Comanche to turn livid with envy, while he sped down the hill in huge, reckless lunges that were extremely trying on the sea of his garments.

A glance back showed the snake still to be gaining, and realizing he could not keep up the killing pace Stevenson took to a young sapling and shinnied up, only to be followed by the snake. He dropped to the ground and grabbed a club and decided to die game. The snake reared at him and the battle was on. At first he could not get the elusive and wily demon. He finally got in a crushing snipe on the animal's back and the fight was over, while he dropped from exhaustion. Those who saw the snake are at a loss to classify it. One native writes to a friend in this city that it was a nine-foot black snake with horns and ears and that it had thirteen buttons on its tail, with plink and green stripes along the back. —Detroit News-Tribune.

A REMARKABLE SHOT.

One of the best and most remarkable shots made during the late war with Spain, said a gentleman who made an effort to get into the thick of the fight, "was, in my judgment, made at Miami, and the man who fired the shot was a Louisiana boy and a member of my company. He was detag duty as a provost guard at the time. It was late at night when the soldiers were roused by the quick, clear crack of the camp. No particular attention was paid to the matter at first, as only one shot was fired. But, with a couple of officers, we went out to where the

A Woodland Echo.

As became the life man having the time of his life in the primeval forests of the Tenuagmie Reserve in Canada, the Clerk of the New York Court of Special Sessions was graciously inclined to instruct the workers in camp. There, says the New York Tribune, were two young, unknown men who, with a canoe and a camping outfit, were likewise seeking backwoods experience.

He came once upon one of them laking bread in a portable aluminum oven before a smoldering log fire.

"Ah," said the clerk, assuming a receding position of graceful ease, "baking bread, I see."

"Yes, it doesn't come up for a cent."

"You see," continued the clerk, with rising wisdom, "the baking-powder, which contains cream of tartar, liberates when heated a certain amount of carbonic acid gas, which—"

"Oh, don't talk shop!" interrupted the cook. "I ate it out here!"

"Oh, you do?" the clerk observed, astonished. "What business are you in, may I ask?"

"I'm an assistant professor of chemistry at Yale."

A Use For Prairie Dogs.

Scientists may some time find use for meerkats. On the western plains prairie dogs have been regarded as pest more useless pests and now comes a man who says that they serve a purpose that henceforth instead of States offering bounties for them they will encourage the propagation of the little beasts. Louis Goswami (nomen et omen) has, according to the Omaha Bee, discovered that prairie dogs are a very great aid to the cultivation of alfalfa. Mr. Goswami says that alfalfa, to grow, must be infected with a certain fungus, and that there is no agency of infection so good as the despised prairie dog. His discoveries are the result of four years of experiments.

The Power of Radium.

Suppose one should hold a crystal of radium in his hand with his face turned to the East. Suppose that one of the electrons were a leaden bullet circling the earth in its starting point. He would be shot in the back from the westward five times before he could fall to the ground, so rapid is the movement of the electrons.

The Funny Side of Life.

THE SECOND-HAND SHELVES.

Small wonders that the cynic laugh. The book which in its recent prisms Sold at a dollar and a half Is vainly offered at a dime. —Washington Star.

TAKE YOUR CHOICE.

Student—"What is pessimism?"
Philosopher—"The faith of cowards."
Student—"Then what is optimism?"
Philosopher—"The faith of fools."
—New York Weekly.

THAT'S DIFFERENT.

"Hello, old chap. I hear you've lost your job?"
"Well, I wouldn't put it like that, exactly, but the firm has been foolish enough to sever its connection with me."
—New York Journal.

FORBEARANCE ON BOTH SIDES.

Harry—"You and Tom appear to be the best of friends."
Dick—"Why shouldn't we be? We never say what we think of each other."
—Boston Transcript.

TOO BUSY.

"You seem to have lost interest in the mothers' meetings," suggested the woman who aimed to make the world better.
"Oh, no," replied the young matron who had been a regular attendant for some time. "I haven't lost interest in them, but I'm a real and not merely a theoretical mother now, and I haven't time to go."
—Chicago Evening Post.

THE VOICE OF EXPERIENCE.

"I don't care to marry—at least not yet," said the girl.
"Why not?"
"Because as matters are now I have the attentions of half a dozen men, while if I marry I would have the attention of only one."
"Foh!" exclaimed the matron, "you wouldn't have even that."
—Chicago Post.

HE MERELY MADE IT.

"My boy doesn't seem to have got along here very well," said the office boy's father.
"Well, to be perfectly frank with you," replied the employer, "I must say no."
"Ah! What's his trouble?"
"He hasn't any trouble; it's the rest of us who have had that."
—Chicago Tribune.

THE MODERN STANDARD.

"A magnificent work, his latest story, you say?"
"Magnificent! Why, it's the finest story that has been published this century."
"Indeed! What's the general idea?"
"Oh, half morocco, gold or uncut edges, cloth edition, finished in four colors, with illuminated pages to every chapter."
—Baltimore News.

THE SWITCHMAN.

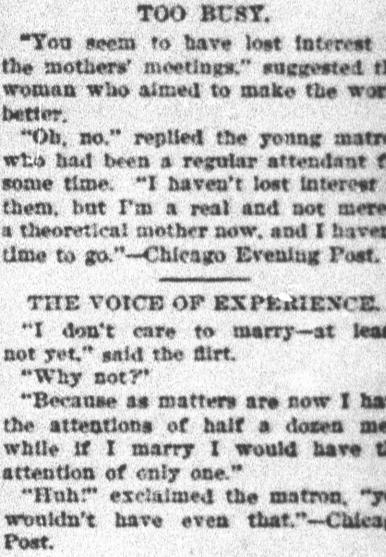
Said precious little Tommy.
The household's pet and pride,
"I'll hide my papa's switch, and then He cannot switch my hide."
—New York Sun.

THE GLADSTONE GUY.

"It always exhausts my patience," remarked the Chronic Kicker, "when I go to a doctor's office and find I am the last to be waited on."
"Well," returned the Gladstone Guy, "the doctor can say the same, can't he?"
"What do you mean?"
"His patients are exhausted when he comes to you, surely!"
—Louisville Post.



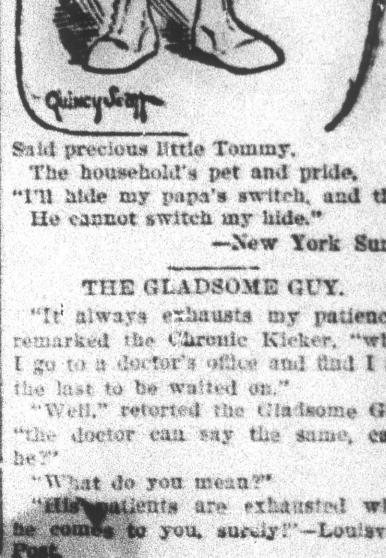
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